

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested. Claims 1-4 have been canceled. Claim 9 has been amended. Claims 12-18 are newly added. No new matter has been added.

Claims 5-8 stand allowed. Claims 10 and 11 were rejected as being dependent on a rejected base claim but were otherwise deemed to recite allowable subject matter. Claims 1-4, and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) based on U.S. Patent no. 6,912,385 of Namba et al. or U.S. Patent Application Publication no. 2003/0060188 of Gidron.

Claims 1-4 have been canceled, thus rendering the rejection of those claims moot. Claim 9 has been amended to correct its dependency to depend on claim 8.

Regarding the new claims, independent claims 12 and 13 include limitations substantially similar to those in claims 5 and 6, respectfully. Therefore, Applicants believe that claims 12 and 13 (and all claims that depend on them) are patentable for at least reasons similar to claims 5 and 6.

Therefore, Applicants believe that all pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Dependent Claims

In view of the above remarks, a specific discussion of the dependent claims is considered to be unnecessary. Therefore, Applicants' silence regarding any dependent claim is not to be interpreted as agreement with, or acquiescence to, the rejection of such claim or as waiving any argument regarding that claim.

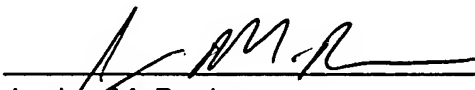
Conclusion

For the foregoing reasons, the present application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is earnestly requested.

If there are any additional charges/credits, please charge/credit our deposit account no. 02-2666.

Respectfully submitted,
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